

CPYRGHT

Our Man in the Kremlin

Penkovsky Fed Data To Keep Bosses Happy

(Sixth in a Series)

By Frank Gibney

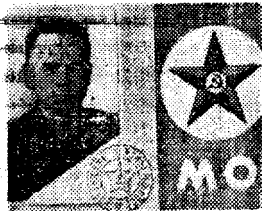
CPYRGHT

Between July 15 and Aug. 10, 1961, Col. Oleg Penkovsky played out the second round of his harrowing espionage game in London. He spent part of each day working with Soviet delegates to the trade exhibition, or running through plans

for Soviet espionage work in Britain with other Russian intelligence officers in the soundproofed basement room used by the intelligence "president" (i.e. the officer in charge) of the Soviet embassy at 48 Kensington Gardens.

At night, or during other off-hours, he would meet with the four American and British intelligence officers assigned to him in one of MI-6's "safe houses" for his real intelligence mission—explaining the documents he had obtained from the secret files in Moscow, exposing further Soviet intelligence missions in the West, elaborating on technical aspects of the Soviet missile program as well as information on Khrushchev's political and diplomatic strategy. Rarely in the history of espionage has any country's high command been so thoroughly penetrated as the Kremlin was during the critical 16 months when Col. Penkovsky worked for the West.

Since Penkovsky had come to Britain again on a Soviet spying mission, it was necessary for the British and Americans to give him some intelligence material of apparent value to forward to his superiors in Moscow. This was provided. Penkovsky thus kept sending reports to Moscow of ostensibly new information on military as well as political objectives (e.g. "In traveling from London to Sheffield I observed for the second time in the southern outskirts of the city of Stamford a military airfield,



on which British air force planes were based... I had the opportunity to study more carefully the indicated objectives... Such reports kept Penkovsky's superiors in Moscow happy and unsuspecting.

Amazing Coolness

With amazing coolness, the volunteer spy for the West also went on to advance his standing as a loyal Communist Party man with Moscow in other ways. One quiet morning he and Greville Wynne took a trip to see Karl Marx's grave in Highgate Cemetery and discovered it was in a bad state of neglect. Penkovsky wrote a letter of protest directly to the First Secretary of the Central Committee in Moscow. In the letter, Comrade Penkovsky told Comrade Khrushchev that, as "a loyal Marxist" he found such neglect an appalling reflection on communism and the Soviet Union.

Moscow took swift action. The London Embassy was ordered to set things right immediately and Penkovsky was commended for his "socialist vigilance."

All the while new assignments for Penkovsky came from Washington. It was a tense summer in Europe. The continent still shook from Khrushchev's threats to sign a treaty with East Germany and force the

Western allies out of Berlin. If anything, the Vienna meeting of Khrushchev and President Kennedy had increased the political electricity. It was absolutely vital that the White House and Whitehall have every available piece of information on the extent of Khrushchev's military preparations and his political planning. Above all, they needed to know how far Khrushchev was prepared to go in pursuit of his German "objective."

Some of Penkovsky's sessions with the Anglo-American team lasted as long as ten hours at a stretch. Now that he had switched his allegiance, his dedication to the West was as single-minded as his youthful allegiance to communism. As a literal sign that he was now "your colonel," he asked his contacts to provide him with both a British and an American colonel's uniform. They did so. Pleased as punch, he had his picture taken in both.

As the following excerpt from the Papers indicates, Penkovsky was amazed that both the Western peoples and their governments seemed disposed to accept Khrushchev's boasts at face value. This only made Khrushchev's brinkmanship or "adventurism" grow more dangerous. A firm Western stand was needed, particularly in the case of Berlin.

By Oleg Penkovsky

In my considered opinion, as an officer of the General Staff, I do not believe Khrushchev is too anxious for a general war at the present time. But he is preparing earnestly. If the situation is ripe for war he will start it first in order to catch the probable enemy (the U.S.A. and the Western states) unawares. He would of course like to reach the level of producing missiles by the tens of thousands, launch them like a rain-storm against the West, and, as he calls it, "bury capitalism." In this respect even our marshals and generals consider him to be a provocateur, the one who incites war.

The Western powers must do something to stop him.

Today he will not start a war. Today the Soviet Union is not ready for war. Today he is playing with missiles, but this is playing with fire, and one of these days he will start a real slaughter.

Look what happened during the Hungarian events and Suez crisis in 1956. We in Moscow felt as if we were sitting on a powder-keg. Everyone in the General Staff was against the "Khrushchev adventure." It was better to lose Hungary, as they said, than to lose everything.

Thanks to Khrushchev...

But what did the West do? Nothing. It was asleep. This gave Khrushchev confidence, and after Hungary he began to scream: "I was right!" After the Hungarian incident he dismissed many generals who had spoken out against him. If the West had slapped Khrushchev down hard then, he would not be in power today and Eastern Europe could be free.

Kennedy must carry out a firm and consistent policy toward Khrushchev. There is nothing to fear. Khrushchev is not ready for war. He has to be slapped down again and again every time he gets ready to set off on one of his adventures.

Kennedy has just as much right to help the patriots of Cuba as we had when we "helped" the Hungarians.

This is not just my opinion. Everyone at the General Staff said this. It was said in Marshal Varentsov's home, even on the street-

cars in Moscow. If the West does not maintain a firm policy, then Khrushchev's position will become stronger. He will think even more about his might and right, and in this case he might strike.

The people are very unhappy with Khrushchev's militant speeches. One can hear this everywhere, listening to conversations. Now, at least, one can breathe a little easier than in Beria's time. So one can hear and say a few things.

Continued

On the other hand, the world can be thankful to Khrushchev for his militant words. They forced Kennedy, Macmillan, and de Gaulle to double or triple their military budgets and defense preparedness. If Stalin were alive he would have done all this quietly, but this fool Khrushchev's loud-mouthed. He himself forces the Western powers to strengthen their defense weapons and military potential.

The generals on the General Staff have no love for Khrushchev. They say that he is working to his own detriment. Why is this bald devil allowed to do as he pleases? He blabs too much about Soviet military successes in order to frighten the West, but the West is not stupid. They are also getting ready. What else can they do?

I believe Marshal Varentsov and Khrushchev's assistant Churayev. It was they who claimed that Khrushchev said, "I will drop a hail of missiles on them."

At the Soviet embassy in London I saw a short comment on Mr. Kennedy's recent speech. The speech was called "the militant speech of the President of the United States." That is all we say officially. The Tass intercepts, however, contain the entire speech point by point: first, second, third. First, Kennedy's references to the increase in the budget, next, the increase in the strength of the armed forces, in connection with the new army draft, then the new specific categories of naval flyers, etc. If necessary, the increases must be even greater.

But when we speak privately, it is a different story. At our embassy, I heard many good comments on Kennedy's speech. It was excellent. Everyone criticized Khrushchev, including the military intelligence and the security police 'residents': "There is no reason to be surprised." They all said, "Kennedy's speech is the answer to Khrushchev's saber rattling."

West Must Prepare

The West must be ready. They must be prepared to retaliate with tank and anti-tank forces, in the event of trouble over Berlin. The troops must be trained as well as possible. The Soviet plan to create a conflict in Berlin is simply a bid to win without a fight, but to



Camera Press-Pix

PENKOVSKY PROJECT—This is the grave of Karl Marx in London, which spy Oleg Penkovsky visited, reported to his Soviet superiors to be in a state of neglect and won praise "for his socialist vigilance."

be ready for a fight if it comes. When the time for a showdown comes, it is planned to use tanks to close all the roads and thus cut off all routes to East Germany and to Berlin.

The first echelon will consist of East German troops, the second of Soviet troops. As a whole, the plan provides for combined operations by Soviet and East German troops. If the first echelon is defeated, the second echelon advances, and so on. Khrushchev hopes that before events have reached the phase of the second echelon, the West will start negotiations in which East Germany will also participate. This will result in recognition of East Germany.

The Soviet and German troops will participate jointly in this operation because the Germans cannot be trusted to act independently. In the first place, the East German Army is poorly equipped and insufficiently prepared because we are afraid to supply them with everything. The Germans have no love of us, and there is always a chance that in the future they may turn against us, as

I heard this from many officers, specifically from Gen. Pozovny, and also from Fedorov and Marshal Varentsov. Varentsov, however, added, "We are taking a risk, a big risk."

Importance of Tanks

In 1961, when Khrushchev decided to resolve the Berlin question, a tank echelon was brought to combat readiness on the border in the U.S.S.R., as well as in Czechoslovakia and Poland. That is the truth.

The NATO countries should give particular attention to antitank weapons. Why? Because East Germany has two tank armies in full readiness; this is in addition to the tank armies which are part of the second echelon located on the territories of the U.S.S.R., Czechoslovakia, and Poland.

Khrushchev personally attached a great deal of importance to tank troops, especially in the fight for Berlin. So much importance is attached to tanks, in connection with the Berlin crisis, that controversies have already broken out in the General Staff regarding finances. They are afraid that too much money has been allotted for the tank troops and that there will not be enough for missiles, electronics, and other types of equipment.

Khrushchev has lately become confused on the Berlin matter, particularly because he has realized that the West is firm there. He would like to pursue a hard policy and rattle his saber, but our country suffers from a great many shortages and difficulties which must be eliminated before the West is to be frightened further.

"As soon as the treaty with Germany is signed, an alert will be declared immediately, and our troops in East Germany will occupy all the control points and will take over their defense and support. Our troops will stand by on alert, but they will not occupy these routes immediately, because this might be considered a provocation. We will simply say, 'Please, Americans, British, and French, go to Berlin, but you must request permission from East Germany.'"

"If the Americans, British and French do not want to confer with the East Germans and try to use force, the Germans will open fire. Of course, the Germans do not have enough strength, and then our tanks will move directly into Berlin."

Condensed from the forthcoming book, "The Penkovsky Papers," © 1965, Doubleday & Co., Inc.

Sunday: Sex and the Soviet bosses: Penkovsky's revolution at widespread immorality among the Kremlin elite: Khrushchev and Ma-